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SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG
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SONIC STRIKES!
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Welcome to Sonic's comic book adventures—a world unique & beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where Sonic and his friends work to save the world from the forces of evil!

SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

CHARACTER SELECT

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
THE FASTEST THING ALIVE!

SALLY ACORN
LEADER OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS!

BUNNIE "RABBOT" D'COOLETTE
CYBORG FREEDOM FIGHTER

LUPE THE WOLF
PLAINS WARRIOR

PREVIOUSLY...

KEY TO THE KEYS!

Sonic and his heroic friends—the **Freedom Fighters**—are out fix the **Shattered World**! To do that, they need access to the **seven Gaia Temples** and the power of the **Chaos Emeralds**!

Sonic has learned of the seven **Gaia Keys**—special totems that will allow him to open the **Gaia Gate** and access all of the temples from one place! The Gaia Sage, **Gregorios,** has given him the names and locations of the keys' guardians! With the tracking down of the guardians underway, one other crucial element to saving the world remains: the last Chaos Emerald!

The Freedom Fighters were nearly killed in one of **Dr. Eggman's** traps, in which he used the last Emerald as bait!

Since then the gem's location has remained a mystery...

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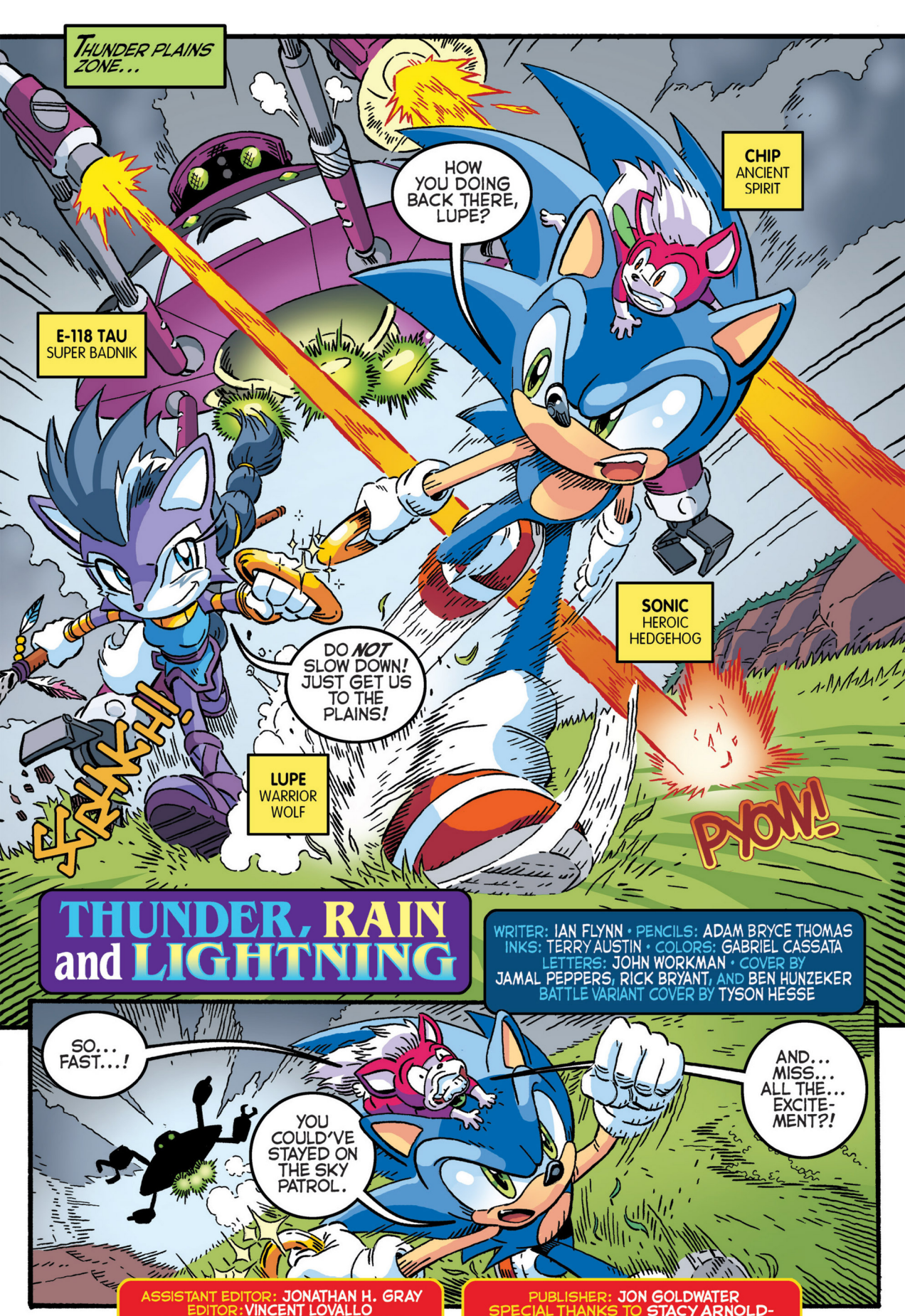

THUNDER, RAIN and LIGHTNING

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INKS: TERRY AUSTIN • COLORS: GABRIEL CASSATA
LETTERS: JOHN WORKMAN • COVER BY
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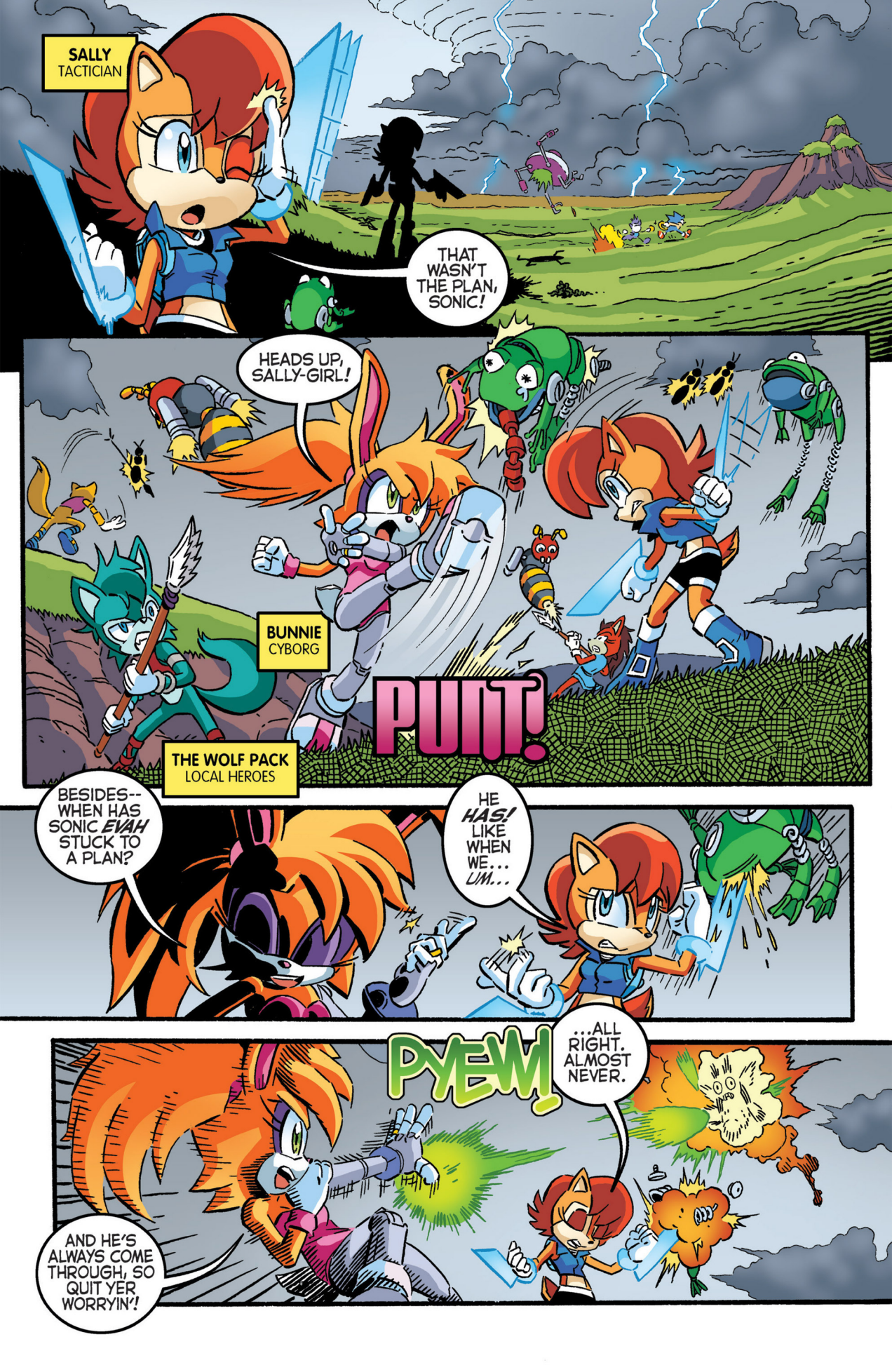
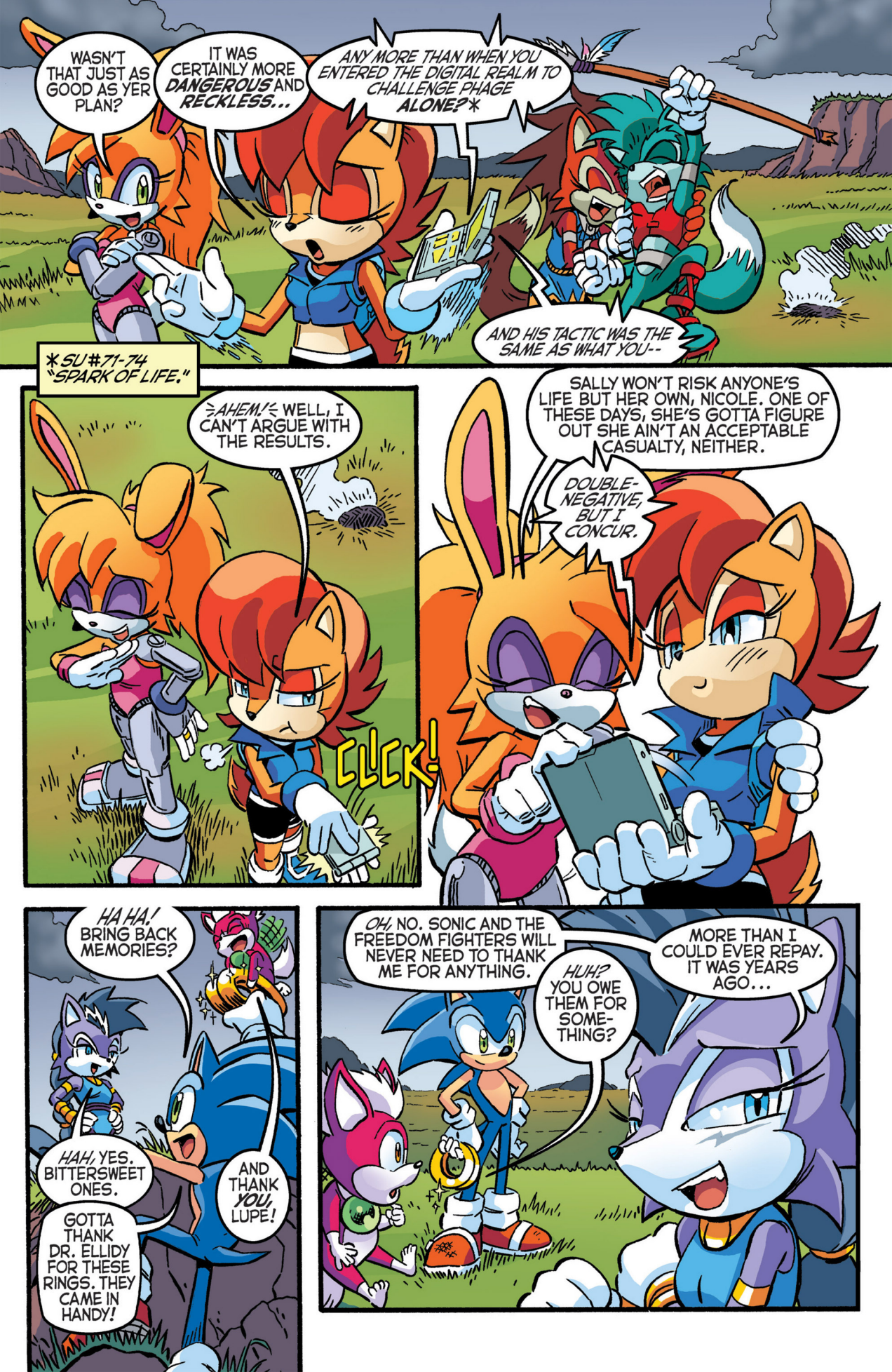
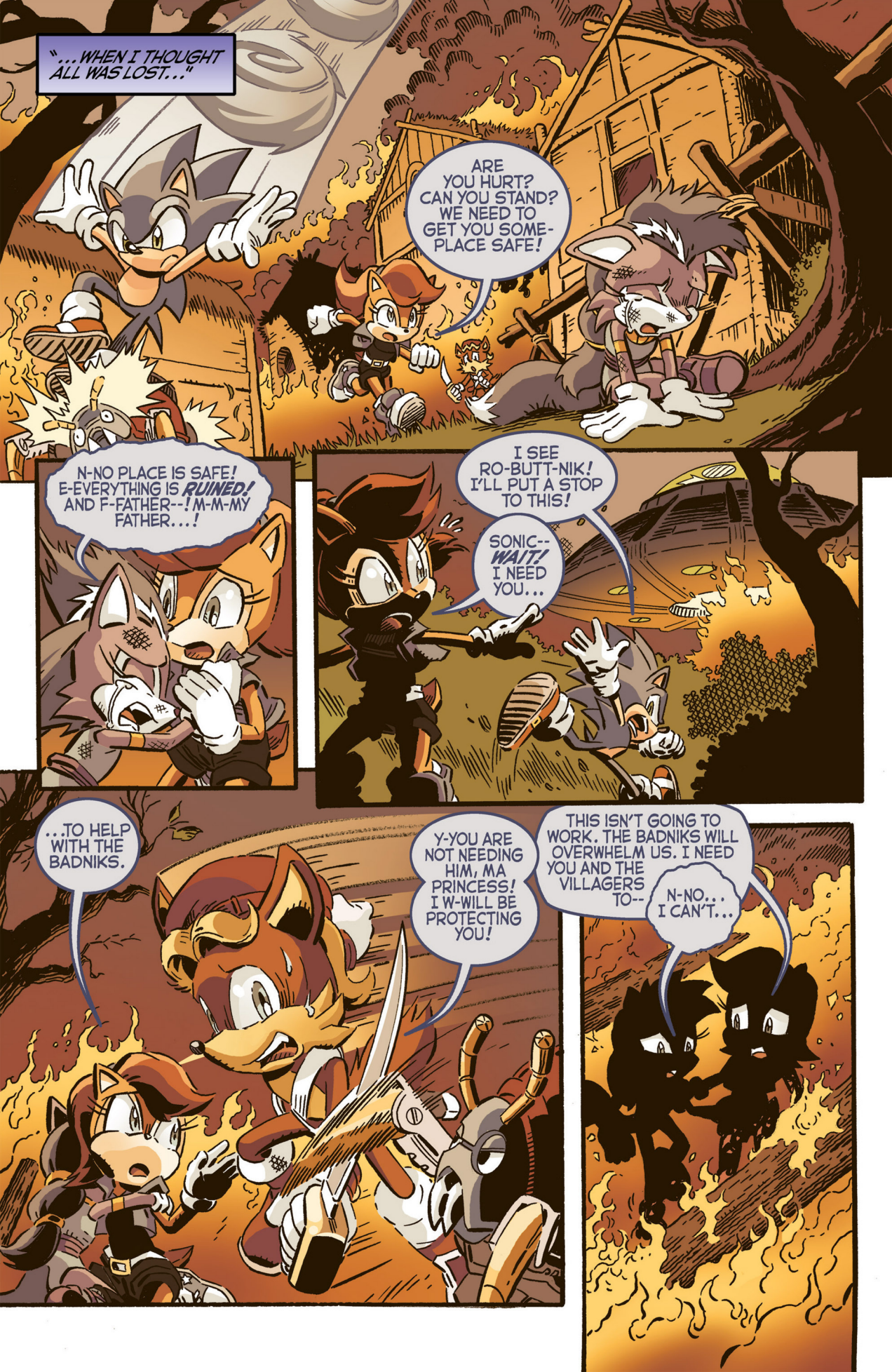
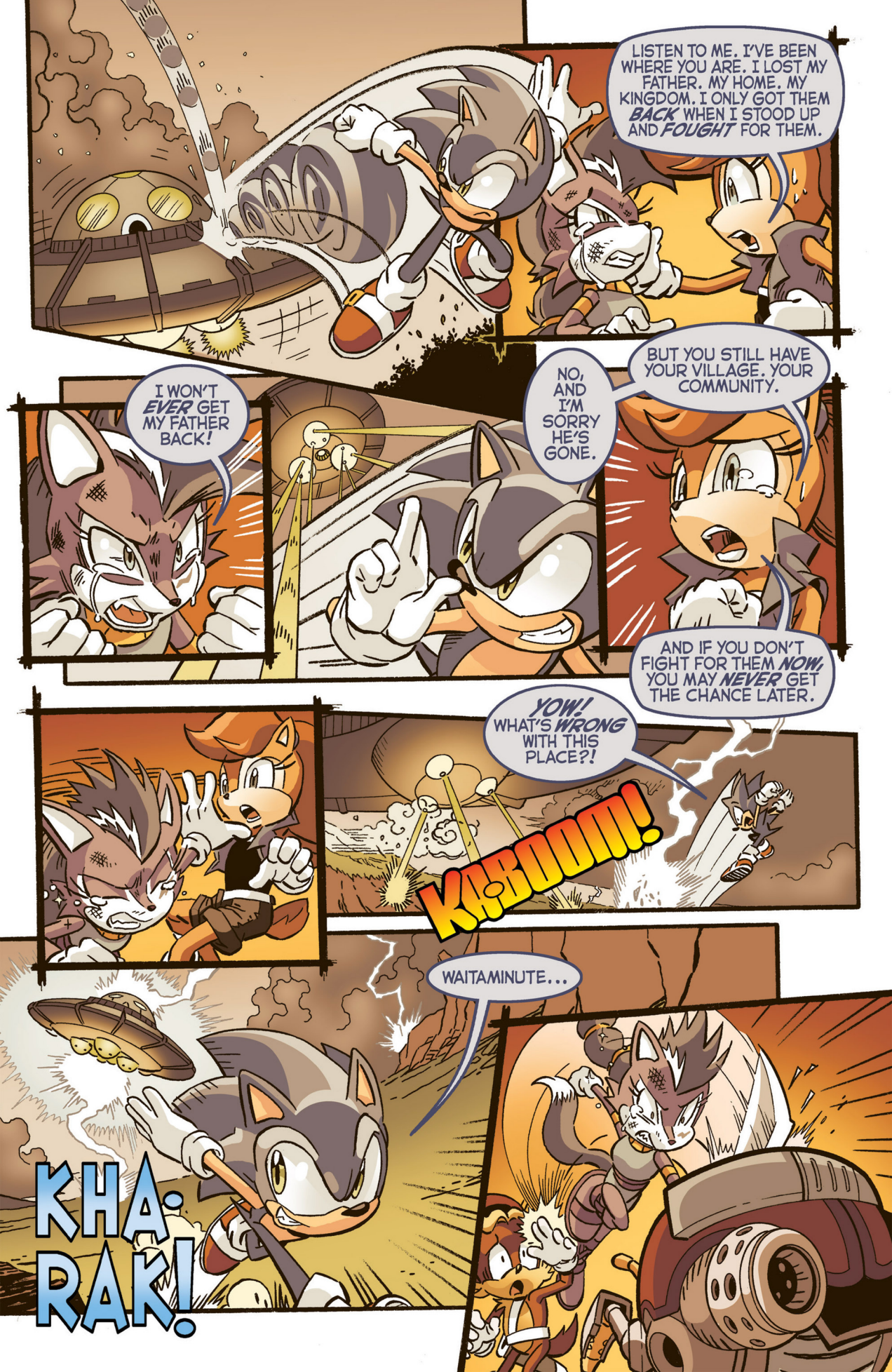

SALLY
TACTICIAN
THAT WASN'T THE PLAN, SONIC!
HEADS UP, SALLY-GIRL!
BUNNIE
CYBORG
PUNT!
THE WOLF PACK
LOCAL HEROES
BESIDES-- WHEN HAS SONIC EVAH STUCK TO A PLAN?
HE HAS! LIKE WHEN WE... UM...
PYEW!
...ALL RIGHT. ALMOST NEVER.
AND HE'S ALWAYS COME THROUGH, SO QUIT YER WORRYIN'!

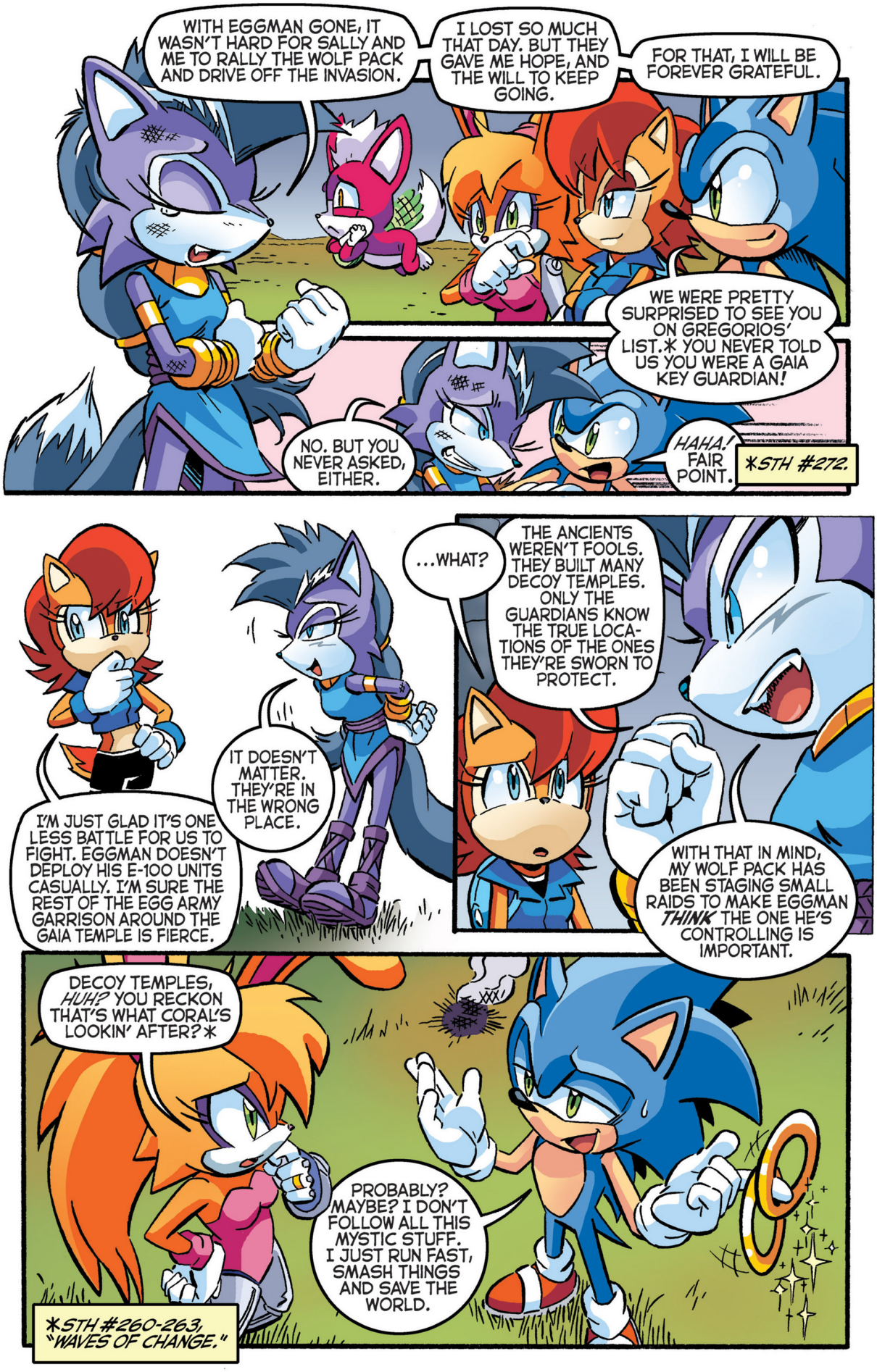
THIS IS YOUR STOP, BUDDY!
DO YOU HAVE HIM?
NRRGH! I'VE GOT HIM!
GOOD. NOW--
SWOOSH!
--DUCK!
HA HA! THANKS FOR FOLLOWING ME. PRETTY DANGEROUS TERRAIN, HUH?
SHA-KOOM!
KRAKA-KOOM!
HAVE FUN WITH THAT!

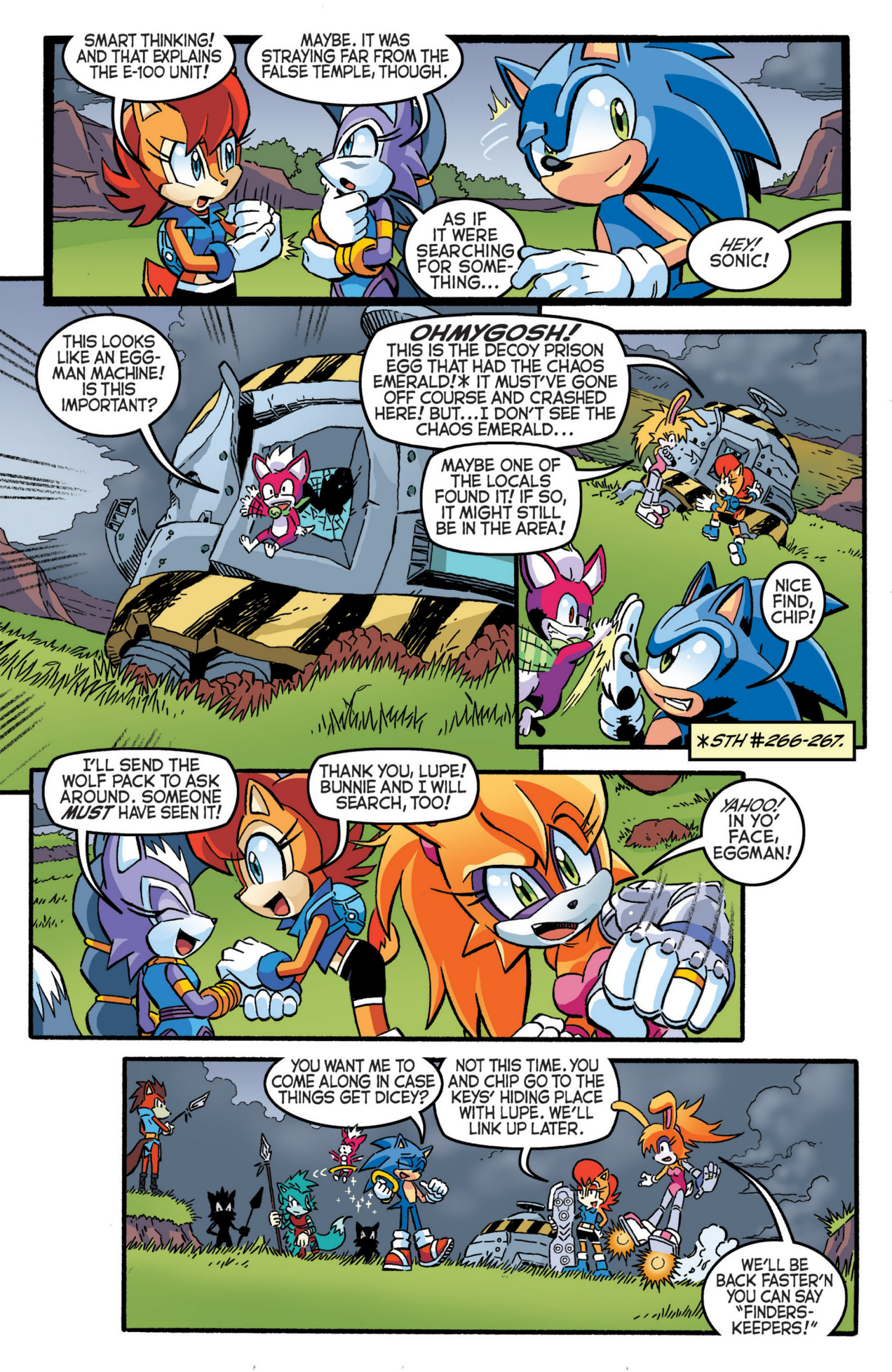

WASN'T THAT JUST AS GOOD AS YER PLAN?
IT WAS CERTAINLY MORE DANGEROUS AND RECKLESS...
ANY MORE THAN WHEN YOU ENTERED THE DIGITAL REALM TO CHALLENGE PHAGE ALONE?*
AND HIS TACTIC WAS THE SAME AS WHAT YOU--
*SU #71-74 "SPARK OF LIFE."
AHEM! WELL, I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THE RESULTS.
CLICK!
SALLY WON'T RISK ANYONE'S LIFE BUT HER OWN, NICOLE. ONE OF THESE DAYS, SHE'S GOTTA FIGURE OUT SHE AIN'T AN ACCEPTABLE CASUALTY, NEITHER.
DOUBLE-NEGATIVE, BUT I CONCUR.
HA HA! BRING BACK MEMORIES?
HAH, YES. BITTERSWEET ONES.
GOTTA THANK DR. ELLIDY FOR THESE RINGS. THEY CAME IN HANDY!
AND THANK YOU, LUPE!
OH, NO. SONIC AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WILL NEVER NEED TO THANK ME FOR ANYTHING.
HUH? YOU OWE THEM FOR SOME-THING?
MORE THAN I COULD EVER REPAY. IT WAS YEARS AGO...


"...WHEN I THOUGHT ALL WAS LOST..."
ARE YOU HURT? CAN YOU STAND? WE NEED TO GET YOU SOME-PLACE SAFE!
N-NO PLACE IS SAFE! E-EVERYTHING IS RUINED! AND F-FATHER--! M-M-MY FATHER...!
I SEE RO-BUTT-NIK! I'LL PUT A STOP TO THIS!
SONIC-- WAIT! I NEED YOU...
...TO HELP WITH THE BADNIKS.
Y-YOU ARE NOT NEEDING HIM, MA PRINCESS! I W-WILL BE PROTECTING YOU!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO WORK. THE BADNIKS WILL OVERWHELM US. I NEED YOU AND THE VILLAGERS TO--
N-NO... I CAN'T...

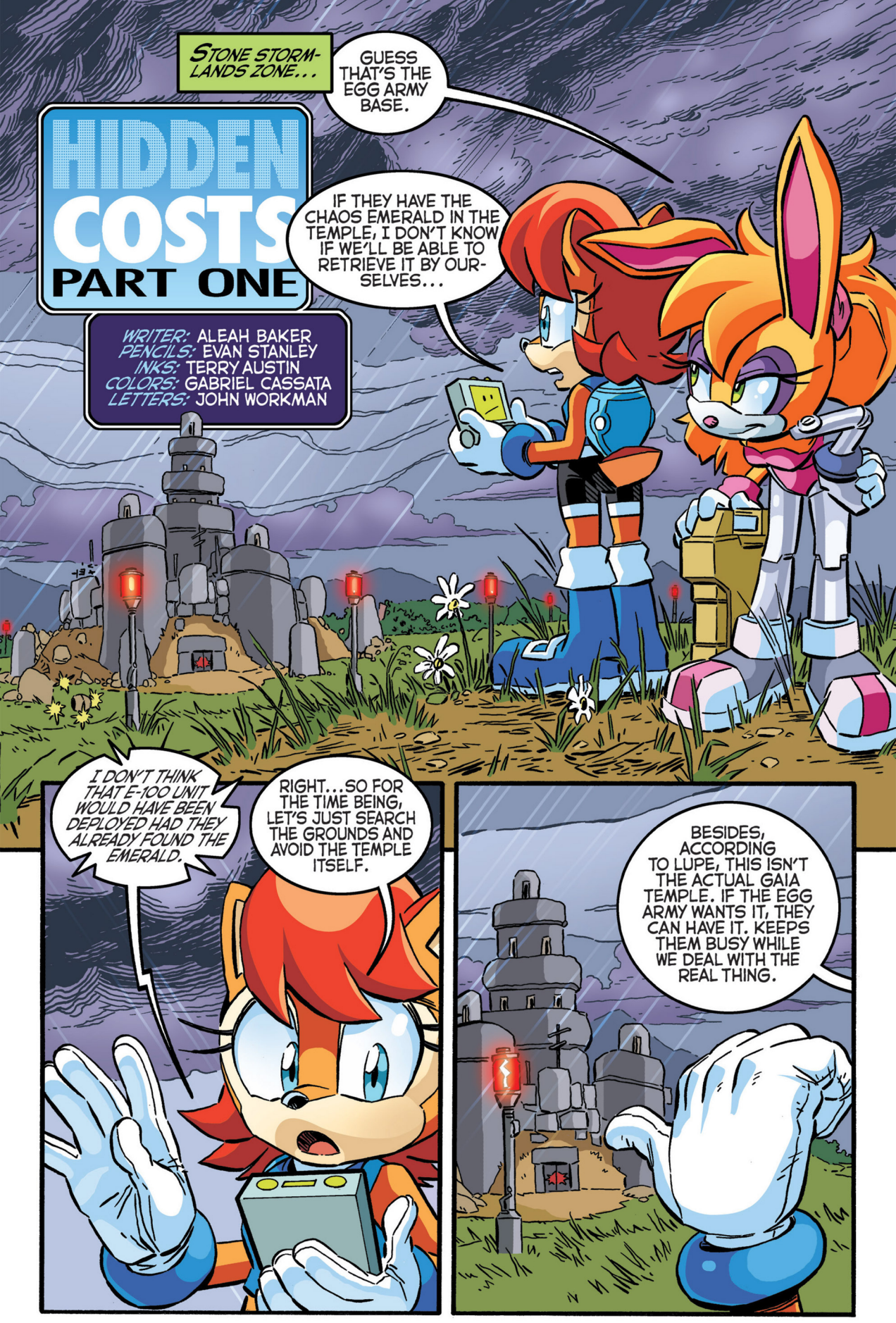

LISTEN TO ME. I'VE BEEN WHERE YOU ARE. I LOST MY FATHER. MY HOME. MY KINGDOM. I ONLY GOT THEM BACK WHEN I STOOD UP AND FOUGHT FOR THEM.
BUT YOU STILL HAVE YOUR VILLAGE. YOUR COMMUNITY.
NO, AND I'M SORRY HE'S GONE.
I WON'T EVER GET MY FATHER BACK!
AND IF YOU DON'T FIGHT FOR THEM NOW, YOU MAY NEVER GET THE CHANCE LATER.
YOW! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PLACE?!
KABOOM!
WAITAMINUTE...
KHA-RAK!

KRAK-
ARRRGH!
KOOM!
HAHA! AWESOME!
I HATE YOU, HEDGE-HOG!
BA-DOOM!
RIGHT BACK AT'CHA, RO-BUTT-NIK!
STOP CALLING ME THAT!
HAVE IT YOUR WAY-- EGGMAN!
RRRGH!
ALL RIGHT--NOW WE NEED TO FIND THE OTHER VILLAGERS.
THERE'S... THERE'S A SHELTER WE GO TO DURING TORNADOS. MOST OF THEM WILL LIKELY HAVE GONE THERE TO HIDE...
EXCELLENT.
WE CAN DEFEND THAT POSITION.
PLEASE-- LEAD THE WAY.
I JUST SCRAMBLED THE EGGMAN --HAHA!
LET'S START CLEARING OUT THE BADNIKS--
--LIKE SHE'S DOING!
MADAME... MY SWORD, S'IL VOUS PLAIT?


WITH EGGMAN GONE, IT WASN'T HARD FOR SALLY AND ME TO RALLY THE WOLF PACK AND DRIVE OFF THE INVASION.
I LOST SO MUCH THAT DAY. BUT THEY GAVE ME HOPE, AND THE WILL TO KEEP GOING.
FOR THAT, I WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL.
WE WERE PRETTY SURPRISED TO SEE YOU ON GREGORIOS' LIST.* YOU NEVER TOLD US YOU WERE A GAIA KEY GUARDIAN!
NO. BUT YOU NEVER ASKED, EITHER.
HAHA! FAIR POINT.
*STH #272.
I'M JUST GLAD IT'S ONE LESS BATTLE FOR US TO FIGHT. EGGMAN DOESN'T DEPLOY HIS E-100 UNITS CASUALLY. I'M SURE THE REST OF THE EGG ARMY GARRISON AROUND THE GAIA TEMPLE IS FIERCE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THEY'RE IN THE WRONG PLACE.
...WHAT?
THE ANCIENTS WEREN'T FOOLS. THEY BUILT MANY DECOY TEMPLES. ONLY THE GUARDIANS KNOW THE TRUE LOCATIONS OF THE ONES THEY'RE SWORN TO PROTECT.
WITH THAT IN MIND, MY WOLF PACK HAS BEEN STAGING SMALL RAIDS TO MAKE EGGMAN THINK THE ONE HE'S CONTROLLING IS IMPORTANT.
DECOY TEMPLES, HUH? YOU RECKON THAT'S WHAT CORAL'S LOOKIN' AFTER?*
PROBABLY? MAYBE? I DON'T FOLLOW ALL THIS MYSTIC STUFF. I JUST RUN FAST, SMASH THINGS AND SAVE THE WORLD.
*STH #260-263, "WAVES OF CHANGE."


SMART THINKING! AND THAT EXPLAINS THE E-100 UNIT!
MAYBE. IT WAS STRAYING FAR FROM THE FALSE TEMPLE, THOUGH.
AS IF IT WERE SEARCHING FOR SOME-THING...
HEY! SONIC!
THIS LOOKS LIKE AN EGG-MAN MACHINE! IS THIS IMPORTANT?
OHMYGOSH! THIS IS THE DECOY PRISON EGG THAT HAD THE CHAOS EMERALD!* IT MUST'VE GONE OFF COURSE AND CRASHED HERE! BUT...I DON'T SEE THE CHAOS EMERALD...
MAYBE ONE OF THE LOCALS FOUND IT! IF SO, IT MIGHT STILL BE IN THE AREA!
NICE FIND, CHIP!
*STH #266-267.
I'LL SEND THE WOLF PACK TO ASK AROUND. SOMEONE MUST HAVE SEEN IT!
THANK YOU, LUPE! BUNNIE AND I WILL SEARCH, TOO!
YAHOO! IN YO' FACE, EGGMAN!
YOU WANT ME TO COME ALONG IN CASE THINGS GET DICEY?
NOT THIS TIME. YOU AND CHIP GO TO THE KEYS' HIDING PLACE WITH LUPE. WE'LL LINK UP LATER.
WE'LL BE BACK FASTER'N YOU CAN SAY "FINDERS-KEEPERS!"

COOL. SEE YOU SOON, LADIES! WE'LL HAVE THIS PLANET FIXED IN NO TIME!
SALLY AND BUNNIE'S ADVENTURE CONTINUES NOW!
NEXT TIME, SONIC FINDS NEW FRIENDS AND FOES WHILE SEARCHING FOR THE GAIA KEYS!
DON'T MISS OUT ON SONIC UNIVERSE EVERY MONTH, SONIC SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE AND SONIC SUPER DIGEST EVERY SEASON AND THE GRAPHIC NOVEL LIBRARY ANYTIME!

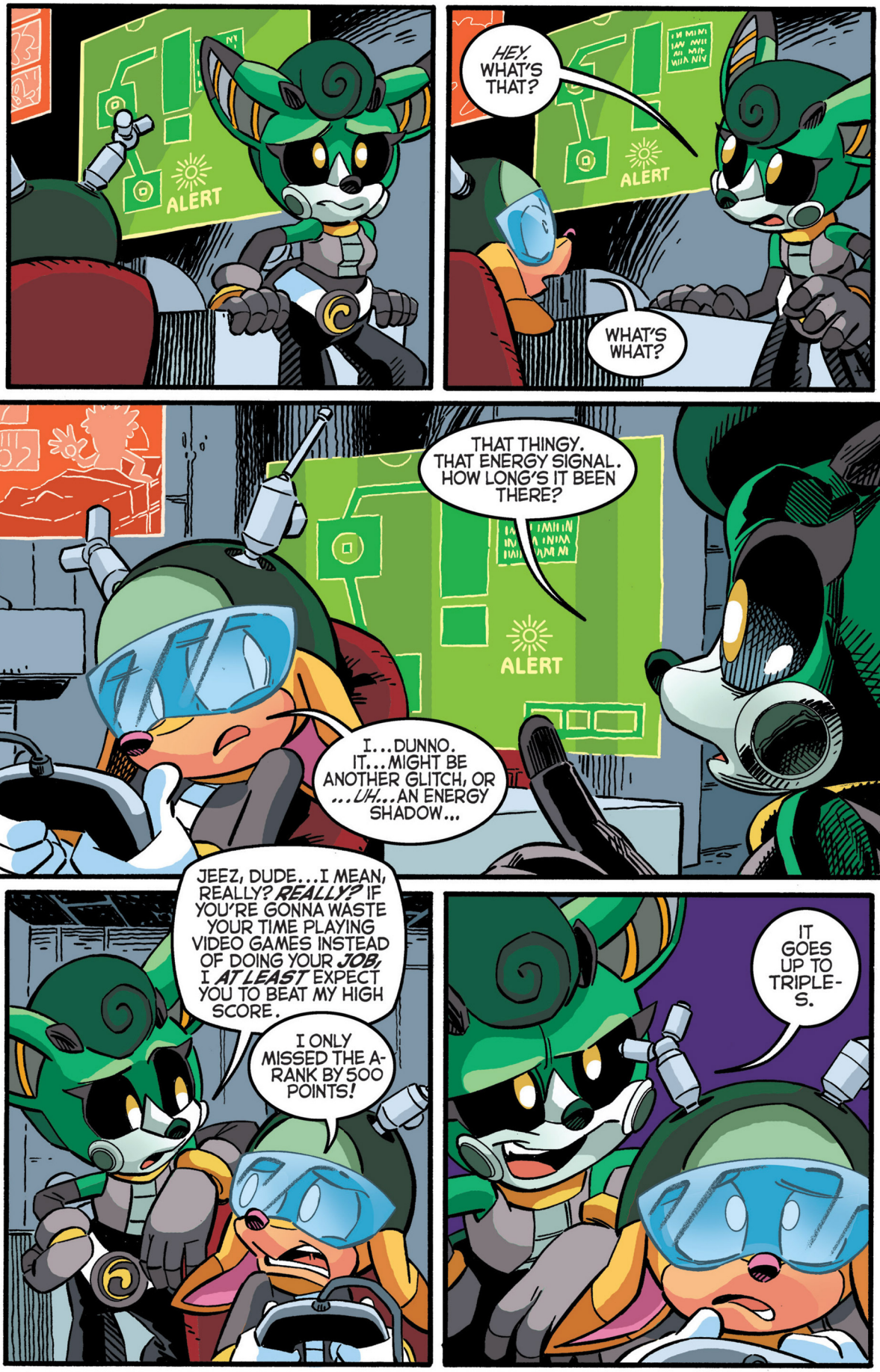

STONE STORM-LANDS ZONE...
HIDDEN COSTS
PART ONE
WRITER: ALEAH BAKER
PENCILS: EVAN STANLEY
INKS: TERRY AUSTIN
COLORS: GABRIEL CASSATA
LETTERS: JOHN WORKMAN
GUESS THAT'S THE EGG ARMY BASE.
IF THEY HAVE THE CHAOS EMERALD IN THE TEMPLE, I DON'T KNOW IF WE'LL BE ABLE TO RETRIEVE IT BY OURSELVES...
I DON'T THINK THAT E-100 UNIT WOULD HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED HAD THEY ALREADY FOUND THE EMERALD.
RIGHT...SO FOR THE TIME BEING, LET'S JUST SEARCH THE GROUNDS AND AVOID THE TEMPLE ITSELF.
BESIDES, ACCORDING TO LUPE, THIS ISN'T THE ACTUAL GAIA TEMPLE. IF THE EGG ARMY WANTS IT, THEY CAN HAVE IT. KEEPS THEM BUSY WHILE WE DEAL WITH THE REAL THING.

WITH THAT IN MIND, LET'S DO OUR BEST TO NOT ALERT THEM OF OUR PRESENCE.
AH'M GUESSIN' WE CAN'T JUST FLY OVER THIS HERE GATE.
THE SECURITY FIELD IS MORE OF A SPHERE THAN A GATE... DISABLING IT COMPLETELY WILL LIKELY SET OFF THE ALARM REGARDLESS. BUT I THINK I CAN DISRUPT IT WIRELESSLY WITHOUT TRIGGERING A RESPONSE... IF WE'RE QUICK.
READY?
GO!
WHEW!
NICE WORK, NICOLE!
WELL, I TRY.

WE'LL COVER GROUND FASTER IF WE SPLIT UP. BUNNIE, YOU HEAD WEST. KEEP IT STEALTHY--NO UNNECESSARY RADIO CONTACT.
GOTCHA. GOOD LUCK!
OH, COME ON ...I HIT "JUMP"!
CHAOS COLA
HERE WE GO!
SMALL CHIPS
ANY IDEA WHAT HAPPENED?

...LOOKS LIKE TAU WANDERED INTO THE THUNDER PLAINS ZONE AND GOT FRIED. STILL NOT SURE *WHY* IT WENT OFF COURSE LIKE THAT.
SHALL I--
...HUH.
CASSIA
CO-EGG BOSS
EGG BOSS CLOVE
REGIONAL EGG ARMY LEADER
SNAIL CHIPS
SOMETHING WRONG?
I...*UH*...THE SECURITY FIELD BLIPPED OUT. LIKE, IT TURNED OFF FOR A SECOND, BUT IT'S BACK ON NOW...
...IT'S PROBABLY JUST A GLITCH...
LAST TIME, YOU SAID, "IT'S PROBABLY JUST A FLICKY," AND IT WAS ACTUALLY SOME LOST IDIOT.
WELL. YEAH...BUT HE DIDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING. I MEAN, IT WAS JUST FOR A SECOND...SO...
...*SHOULD* I SOUND THE ALARM...? LADY CLOVE?
NO NEED. I'LL GO TAKE A LOOK.

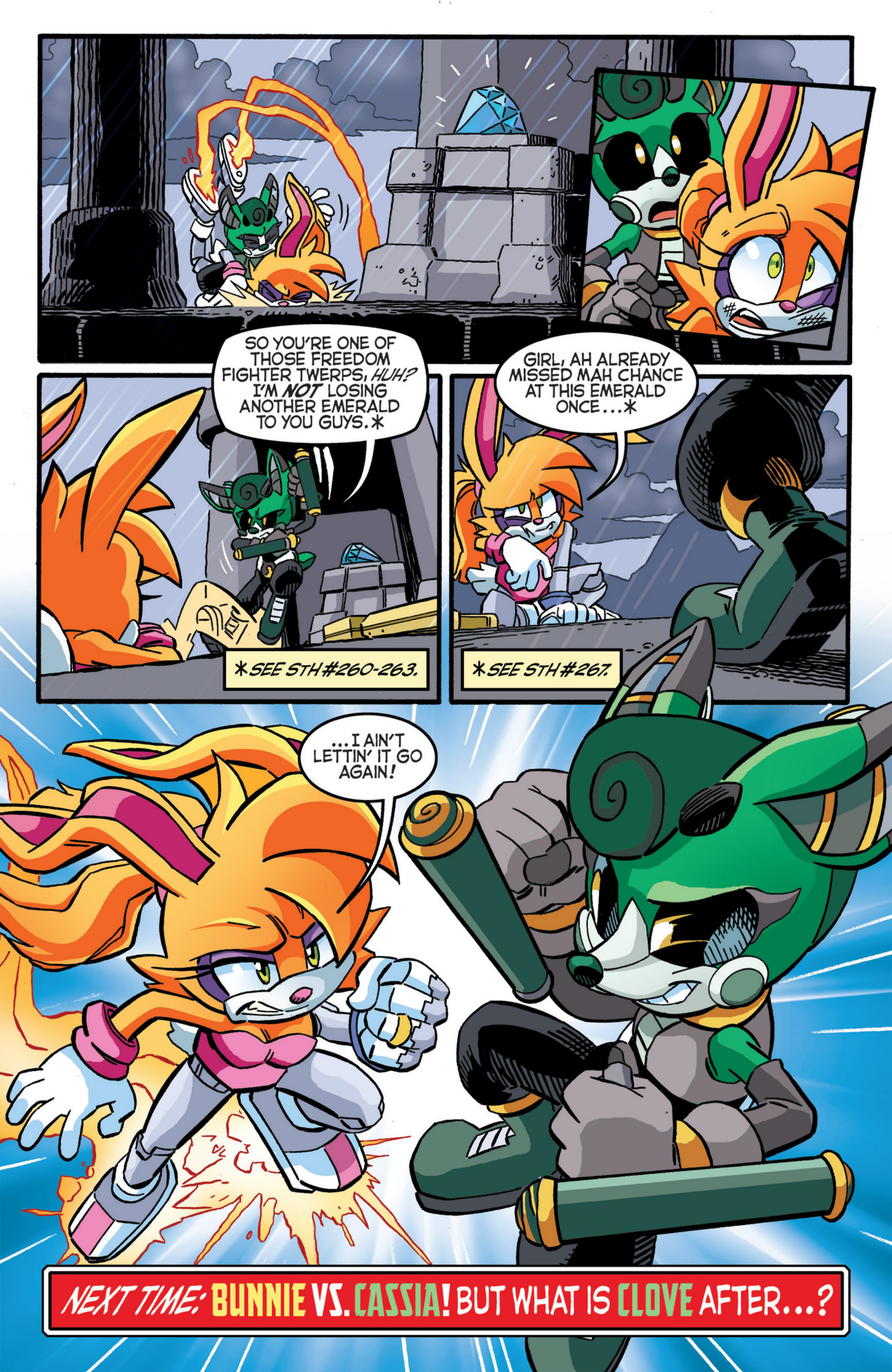
OOH, I'LL COME WITH YOU! LET'S BUST SOME HEADS!
NO, CASS. I DON'T THINK HEAD-BUSTING IS NECESSARY... YET.
AW, COME ON! I CAN WATCH YOUR BACK! SIS...
...I CAN KEEP UP. YOU KNOW I CAN.
I DO. I JUST HAVE AN IDEA, AND IT'LL WORK BETTER IF I GO ALONE. TRUST ME.
YOU KNOW I DO.
PUT OUR SOLDIERS ON STANDBY...THOUGH I HOPE THEY WON'T BE NEEDED. I'LL BE BACK SHORTLY.
CASSIA, DON'T FORGET YOUR TREAT-MENT.


ALERT
HEY. WHAT'S THAT?
ALERT
WHAT'S WHAT?
THAT THINGY. THAT ENERGY SIGNAL. HOW LONG'S IT BEEN THERE?
ALERT
I...DUNNO. IT...MIGHT BE ANOTHER GLITCH, OR ...UH...AN ENERGY SHADOW...
JEEZ, DUDE...I MEAN, REALLY? *REALLY?* IF YOU'RE GONNA WASTE YOUR TIME PLAYING VIDEO GAMES INSTEAD OF DOING YOUR *JOB*, I *AT LEAST* EXPECT YOU TO BEAT MY HIGH SCORE.
I ONLY MISSED THE A-RANK BY 500 POINTS!
IT GOES UP TO TRIPLE-S.

ANYWAY, SINCE SOMEONE WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION TO THINGS, I'M GONNA GO CHECK OUT THAT WHATEVER-IT-IS.
ERM, LADY CASSIA, YOUR SISTER SAID--
THAT SHE WAS GOING ALONE, NOT THAT I COULDN'T LEAVE.
TRIPLE-S?...
WE COULD SEND A BADNIK INSTEAD--
PSH, AND LET IT WANDER OFF AND TRASH ITSELF LIKE TAU DID?
NO WAY. BESIDES, I'M BORED.
"IT'S NOT FAIR THAT CLOVE GETS TO HAVE ALL THE FUN."

ELSEWHERE IN THE RUINS...
PING!
PLEASE BE THE CHAOS EMERALD...!
DID SOMEONE BRING IT HERE, THINKIN' IT WOULD SAVE THE WORLD...?
OH MAH STARS!
WHOA! WHO THE HECK--

TOO SLOW, LADY!
HEY!
YOU MAY BE QUICK, HON--
VRRRRMM
--BUT YOU AIN'T NO SUGARHOG!
SKEW!
AHH!
LASERS? SERIOUSLY? UGH, I SO SHOULD'VE GOTTEN LASERS!
OH, NO, YOU DON'T!
UGH!


SO YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE FREEDOM FIGHTER TWERPS, HUH? I'M NOT LOSING ANOTHER EMERALD TO YOU GUYS.*
*SEE STH #260-263.
GIRL, AH ALREADY MISSED MAH CHANCE AT THIS EMERALD ONCE...*
*SEE STH #267.
...I AIN'T LETTIN' IT GO AGAIN!
NEXT TIME: BUNNIE VS. CASSIA! BUT WHAT IS CLOVE AFTER...?

Letter from the EDITOR

Editorial commentary that's "wolf-packed" with excitement!

LUPE
WARRIOR
WOLF

BELOW: The final version of Lupe's new design by editor, **Vincent Lovallo**.

ABOVE: Several tweaks used to determine how Lupe's hair will look.

Hey there, Sonic comic readers!

It's been a while since we've done a full fledged editorial column, so let's get right to it!

I hope you all enjoyed "Thunder, Rain and Lightning"! I was super stoked when Sonic comics mega-scribe **Ian Flynn** told me that **Lupe the Wolf** would make her return in this issue, with an updated look to boot!

Check out the reference images made by yours truly! Ian and I went through a few changes to her hair before getting her design down solid. I think Lupe looks pretty fierce, don't you? Many thanks to penciller **Adam Bryce Thomas**, who did a terrific job drawing both her and the wolf-pack!

I'd also like to give a shout-out to the awesome **Aleah Baker** who wrote "Hidden Costs". This 3-part story features the return of the pronghorn deer sisters **Clove** and **Cassia** who first debuted in *Sonic the Hedgehog* #263. Fittingly, both that story and this one were written by Aleah and pencilled by **Evan Stanley**! Check out Evan's original illustration for Clove and Cassia!

Well that's all the behind-the-scenes stuff for now. Catch ya next time for more super Sonic fun!

– Vincent "Vin" Lovallo
Editor

ABOVE: Rough color models of Cassia and Clove, the sister pronghorns. Concepts by **Aleah Baker** and art by **Evan Stanley**.

SONIC GRAMS FAN ART

Johanna A. sent to Sonic@ArchieComics.com

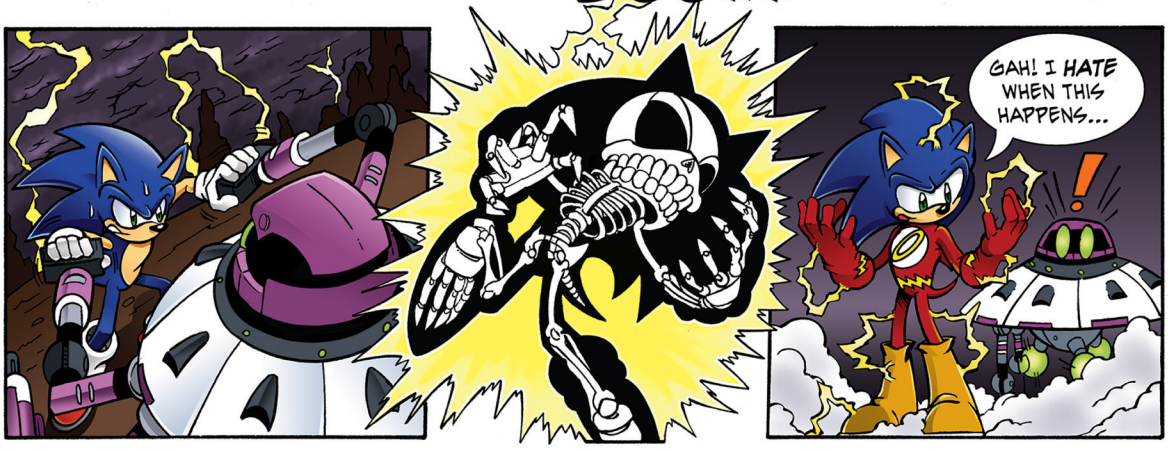
Helen R. sent to Sonic@ArchieComics.com

Mackenzie F.P. from Texas

Rocio V. sent to Sonic@ArchieComics.com

OFF PANEL

FLASHBANG BOOM OR CREASED LIGHTNING



SCRIPT: ERIC ESQUIVEL PENCILS: LAMAR WELLS INKS: RICK BRYANT COLORS: ALEAH BAKER

SONIC GRAMS

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OR TWEET AT US USING #SONICGRAMS!

Dear 'Sonic Grams,'
Hi! My name is Grayson! I've loved your comic since 2008! It's an awesome series! Sonic the Hedgehog is my #1 hero! He saves the world with speed, awesomeness and care! He's my kinda guy!

Hiya, Grayson! Sonic's a pretty cool dude, as far as dudes go, dude!

I think the comics have changed A LOT since 2008! Personally, I love the new world more! Sally finally does combat! Sonic is better than ever! Amy gets to go on missions and isn't always crazy!

We like to think the new universe strikes a good character balance! There's still much more to cover but we're getting there!

1. Does Sonic have the greatest speed in the new world?

Sonic's the fastest guy in any world! Superheroes, desert birds, mice in sombreros -- he's got 'em all beat!

2. Can Sally or any of the Freedom Fighters turn super?

With the power of all 7 Chaos Emeralds, Sonic, Shadow & Silver can go super. Blaze can use the power of the Sol Emeralds to turn into Burning Blaze. As for the rest of the cast, it's anyone's guess!

3. When are Silver, Blaze and Shadow showing up again?

You can find Silver in the current pages of Sonic Universe! We hope you're digging "The Silver Age"! Shadow and Blaze haven't shown up yet, but they may turn up sooner than you think!

Thank y'all for the work you do! Stay "way past cool!"

Grayson B.
from **Alabama**

Thank you for being an awesome fan!

Dear 'Sonic Grams,'
I've had doubts about emailing you because I didn't think anyone would listen, but I want to contact you about the many new changes in the Sonic comics.

We can't always answer everyone but we do read every letter and we certainly care about every fan, be they new fans or old fans!

1. I know Robotnik's name is Eggman and Japan has called him that since his creation, but I knew Sonic's archenemy as Robotnik ever since I saw the cartoons. Everything he does suits his 'Robotnik' name better. I can't take 'Eggman' seriously. It was better off as a name to mock him with, along with Ro'butt'nik and other funny names. Can you change his name back, please?

"Robotnik" as a name pops up every now and then even in the games (we haven't forgotten it)! But he is usually referred to as Dr. Eggman. We want to stick with that, but use both names for funny insults issued by Sonic.

2. Robotnik's the only villain that Sonic has to deal with. Can't you use other villains?

Well don't forget, there's Nack and the Hooligans, Breezie & the S-6 Squad, Eclipse, Dr. Snively, all the new Egg Bosses and Naugus is back as of last issue... with a sister?!? Don't worry about newer villains. We've got that covered!

3. I'm a HUGE fan of Sonic and Sally being together so I'm bugged because Amy gets more attention than Sally and I don't like that. I want Sally to be involved with Sonic. Can you make them a couple again?

Sally's more concerned with leading her friends against the tyranny of Eggman than a love life, plus she's good friends with Amy and her dynamic with Sonic is still there even if it's not romantically linked.

Thank you for reading. I hope you can answer soon.

Ian M. sent to
Sonic@ArchieComics.com

Thank you for your feedback, Ian!

We'll see y'all next issue!

CHECK OUT MORE AWESOME TITLES FROM Archie ACTION!

"THE SILVER AGE"
SONIC UNIVERSE 79-82

"RED SHIFT"
MEGA MAN 54

NEXT ISSUE: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 278